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Administrative and budgetary issues

Relationship between the United Nations Environment Programme and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariat or performs secretariat functions

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to resolution 2/18, provides an update on the progress made and steps taken by the United Nations Environment Programme on matters relating to the institutional framework and accountability, the administrative and financial framework and the mutual supportiveness of programmes of work with regard to the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariat or performs secretariat functions.

* UNEP/EA.3/1.

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I. Introduction

1. By resolution 2/18, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme was requested to take various actions in relation to the multilateral environmental agreements for which the Environment Programme provides the secretariat or performs secretariat functions. The present report provides an update on progress in that regard.

II. Progress on the implementation of resolution 2/18

2. The Environment Programme continues to work towards improving the effectiveness of administrative arrangements, the delivery of services and the mutual supportiveness of programmes of work with regard to it and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariat or performs secretariat functions. The Environment Programme has prepared standardized guidelines and procedures for financial matters to assist in the preparation of budgets, financial monitoring and the preparation of reports, thereby enhancing and streamlining internal processes and policies. It continues to participate actively in meetings of governing bodies and has also taken the action set out below.

A. Institutional framework and accountability

3. On 1 November 2016, the Environment Programme adopted a delegation of authority policy and framework for the management and administration of the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements that simplifies, standardizes, streamlines and makes more transparent the delegation of authority from the Executive Director to the heads of the secretariats.

4. The Environment Programme has begun work on the preparation of a flexible template of options for the provision of secretariat services to the multilateral environmental agreements in an appropriate form and expects to finalize it, in close collaboration with the relevant secretariats, by March 2018. It was informed by the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions of the decisions adopted by the respective conferences of the parties to those conventions during their 2017 meetings with regard to that matter, by which, among other things, the Executive Secretary of the conventions was requested to engage actively to develop a flexible draft template of options, taking into account the delegation of authority policy and framework.

B. Administrative and financial framework

5. A report providing information for the governing bodies of the multilateral environmental agreements on the implications of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards for their operational budgets was circulated in December 2016. Additional information will be provided when received from the United Nations Secretariat.

6. The Environment Programme has developed simpler, clearer and more transparent management procedures for programme support costs through the adoption of a new policy thereon. The secretariats of the relevant multilateral environmental agreements were consulted. If required, further consultations may be held on how to make the policy operational.

C. Mutual supportiveness of programmes of work

7. As requested in paragraph 7 of resolution 2/18, the Environment Programme has taken steps to foster mutual supportiveness between its programmes of work and those of relevant multilateral environmental agreements. The Executive Director has informed the governing bodies of those agreements about the outcomes of the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, including resolution 2/18.

8. Immediately after the second session, consultations between the Environment Programme and the relevant secretariats began on and resulted in the adoption of a strategic portfolio of projects for the implementation of the medium-term strategy 2018–2021 and the programmes of work that reflected, where possible, the programmatic priorities and needs under the agreements, as identified by their governing bodies. The experience gained will inform similar and strengthened procedures in future cycles.

9. The Environment Programme actively supports the implementation of the strategic plans, goals and targets of the relevant multilateral environmental agreements through global, regional and national projects. Environment Programme projects funded by the Global Environment Facility, the Green Climate Fund and other multilateral and bilateral donors (e.g., on the implementation of strategic plans, capacity-building, national reporting and monitoring under individual conventions,

strengthening of national institutions and legislation) are contributing to strengthening the coherent and effective implementation of the agreements.

10. The Environment Programme continues to facilitate cooperation on improving the efficiency of interoperability of data, scientific research and information-sharing, knowledge and tools that are part of the Multilateral Environment Agreement Information and Knowledge Management Initiative. The Environment Programme has also supported work under certain agreements to carry out a mapping exercise linking strategic goals, targets and indicators with the Sustainable Development Goals.

III. Suggested actions

11. The United Nations Environment Assembly may wish to take note of the steps taken by the Executive Director to further improve and make effective the institutional framework and accountability, the administrative and financial framework and the mutual supportiveness of programmes of work with regard to the multilateral environmental agreements for which the Environment Programme provides the secretariat or performs secretariat functions, and request the Executive Director to continue his efforts in that regard openly and transparently.